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ABSTRACT

The ancient world, as exemplified in the theoretical writings of the Greek and Roman rhetoricians, directly influenced the teaching and practice of dictamen as taught for business, for the church, and for law in the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance. Prescriptions on how to communicate in the ancient world formed the core of preparation for the assembly where one could debate, speak, and discuss matters of state. Thus developed compendiums of rules and models for persuading in public, giving students precepts of rhetoric that remained unchanged for centuries. The precepts included inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria and pronuntiatio or actio. As the medieval world applied these canons to the written word, and as public speaking (except for church oratory) went into an eclipse, memoria and pronuntiatio dropped from the theory, not to reenter rhetoric until centuries later. Throughout the Middle Ages there was never a great demand for able public speakers and therefore rhetoric in the old sense of the word was systematically neglected and thus deprived of its reason for existence--training persons for oral discourse. Thus written communication took over the three tenets of rhetoric and employed them in the service of dictamen. This is reflected in selected Italian, German, and English works on written communication. (HOD)

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Incorporation of Operating Precepts of Roman Rhetoric in Medieval and Renaissance Handbooks on Letter Writing.

Working Paper No. 217

Herbert W. Hildebrandt

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Incorporation of Operating Precepts of Roman Rhetoric in Remieval and Renaissance Handbooks on Letter Writing.

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A seminal dissertation, in English, included this chapter heading: "Rhetoric: The 'Business Course' at Medieval Universities."[1] The thrust of the writer was that grammar and particularly rhetoric gave momentum to education; that what we call communication was the core course of early European schools.

Business communication today, or idea movement in the business world in oral or written form, is founded on an ancient oral tradition which changed its formulas to meet the vicissitudes of the social, educational, and political tenor of an earlier time. The heritage of the business letter, for instance, has ancient historical and oral roots.

The church was dominant. Organized business was fledgling. Education was limited. With the medieval world a major propellent within the classroom was rhetoric. But rhetoric with a difference. Rhetoric for the Greeks and Romans was training in oral communication; it gave an orator the tools, philosophy, and logic to persuade. For Aristotle, oral training meant "the faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion."[2] Cicero suggested "There is to my mind no more excellent thing than the power, by means of

oratory, to get a hold on assemblies of men, win their good will, direct their inclinations wherever the speaker wishes, or divert them from whatever he wishes."[3] Quintilian maintained "The artist (orator) is he who has acquired the art, that is to say, he is the orator whose task is to speak well. The work is the achievement of the artist, namely good speaking."[4]

By the Middle Ages there was a difference: parts of rhetoric had spawned off to serve as the foundation for written communication, specifically ars dictamen.[5] Importantly, for example, the six parts of an oration (exordium; narratio; divisio; confirmatio; refutatio; and conclusio) along with three major theoretical precepts (inventio; dispositio; elocutio) became the basis for the theory and practice of letter writing.

Hence my thesis is this: the ancient world, as exemplified in the theoretical writings of the Greek and Roman rhetoricians, directly influenced the teaching and practice of dictamen as taught for business, for the church, and for law in the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance. My intent is to (1) develop the idea by reviewing the ancient theory of rhetoric and simultaneously (2) note its reflection in selected Italian, German, and English work on written communication.

Prescriptions on how to communicate in the ancient world was the bane of every student. And it was these prescriptions which formed the core of preparation for the Assembly, where one could debate, speak, and discuss matters of state. Not all agreed. Plato, the teacher of Aristotle, argued that rhetoric

was not an art, was of little use to a person, and depended on questionable techniques.[6] But Plato lost.

Thus developed compendiums of rules and models for persuading in public, giving students precepts of rhetoric that remained unchanged for centuries; they will form the basis of our discussion: inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronuntiatio or actio.

One more thought. As the medieval world applied the above canons to the written word, and as public speaking except for church oratory went into an eclipse, Memoria [remembering one's arguments and thoughts within a presentation] and Pronuntiatio [Delivering one's thoughts] dropped from the theory, not to re-enter rhetoric until centuries later. The great medieval scholar Charles Sears Baldwin offers this conclusion: "At the fall of Rome the Trivium was dominated by rhetorica; in the Carolingian period, by grammatica; in the high middle age, by dialectica. The shift of emphasis to logic probably began in the eleventh century...Rhetorica, except in dictamen and in some application of the larger ancient precepts of composition to preaching, is at a standstill."[7] Paetow, a bit more casually, notes that "Throughout the Middle Ages there never was a great demand for able public speakers and therefore rhetoric in the old sense of the word was systematically neglected."[8]

Rhetoric was thus deprived of its reason for existence: training persons for oral discourse. Thus written communication took over the three tenets of rhetoric and employed them in the service of dictamen.

I

Inventio[9]

Ancient rhetoric began with inventio, loosely translated as searching out the best available material in logical support of a proposition. Some of its various meanings are these:

--Seeking for plausible arguments
--Discovering artistic and non-artistic proofs, similar to our modern concept of direct and indirect evidence
--Investigating the facts of a case
--Ascertaining whether the case turns on fact, definition, or quality
--Knowing degree of involvement of ethos, pathos, or logos
--Determining status of the case, similar to initial stage of today's concept of the scientific method
--Arranging steps of persuasive presentation

At the fore of this mental exercise was a desire to seek logical relationships between evidence. Once the relationships were determined, the speaker-debater-presenter would have at hand the proof needed to argue a position, orally.

Searching out arguments, thoughts, ideas for dictamen demanded similar use of inventio. A writer had parallel questions: what arguments, what data must I collect before addressing a letter to persons of a high, same, or lower status? Erasmus too in his De Conscribendi Epistolas[10] is aware of these distinctions as is Blount[11] in his statement on inventio:

> "Invention ariseth from your business, whereof there can be no Rules of more certainty, or precepts of better direction given then conjecture may lay down of the seuerall occasions of all mens particular liues and vocations."

Day, the earliest writer in English for appropriate business-church-government letters suggests that "Inuention first, wherein plentifullie is searched and considered, what

kind of matter, how much varietie of sentences, what sorts of figures, how many similitudes, what approbations, diminutions, insinuations and circumstances are presentlie needefull, of furthering to the matter in handling."[12]

Other writers are oblique in their inventio comments, but leave little doubt that collecting material paralleled the process demanded of an oration.

Not so oblique was a mandatory decision as to the type of communication to send a reader. The ancients felt that all communication fit into three oratorical genre: (1) the demonstrative, eulogistic, or epideictic concerned with questions of honor or dishonor; (2) the deliberative, political concerned with expediency or inexpediency; and (3) the forensic, judicial concerned with justice or injustice. I shall pause to view the Roman concepts before seeking their reflections in written communication:

> "Deliberative speeches are either of the kind in which the question concerns a choice between two courses of action, or of the kind in which a choice among several is considered."[13]
>
> "If it should be necessary to assign one single aim to deliberative, I should prefer Cicero's (De Oratore 2.82.334) view that this kind of oratory is primarily concerned with what is honourable."[14]
>
> "An Issue is Juridical when there is agreement on the act, but the right or wrong of the act is in question."[15]
>
> "I now come to the forensic kind of oratory, which presents the utmost variety, but whose duties are no more than two, the bringing and rebutting of charges."[16]
>
> "Let us now turn to the Epideictic kind of cause. Since epideictic includes Praise and Censure, the topics on which praise is founded will, by their contraries, serve us as the bases for censure."[17]

> "There is, then, as I have said, one kind concerned with praise and blame, which, however, derives its name from the better of its two functions and is called laudatory;..."[18]

> "...so there are these three divisions, dealing with judgement, with deliberation and with embellishment; the latter has obtained its special name from the fact that it is particularly employed in panegyrics."[19]

The dictamen works of both the medieval and the Renaissance world show unblushing dependence on the concepts of inventio noted above. One must remember that the continuum of dependence varies from exact replication of words to paraphrase of an idea, but underneath moves a reliance that is unmistakable. The writing world borrowed without pause. One of the earliest imitators was an Italian: Alberich of Monte Cassino, an 11th century writer whose types of letters are noted under subtitles as De diminutione epistole; De conmutatione partium; De constitutione epistole; and the De uariatione epistole.[20]

That Alberich was an influential Italian for subsequent dictamen writers is supported by Nickisch:

> Im Mittelalter selbst ging von der römischen Kurie 'als von der vornehmsten Schule des Briefstils' der stärkste Einfluss auf die zahlreichen Sammlungen mit Brief-und Urkundenmustern (=formulae) aus, deren man sich zu unterrichtlichen und praktischen Zwecken bediente. 'Es kam dann nach dem Vorgan Alberichs von Monte-Cassino [1057-1086] und anderer Italiener ein theoretischer Teil hinzu, und es begann auf diesem Gebiet eine ausgebreitete literarische Thätigkeit."[21]

More influential than the originator of the Italian school was the great humanist scholar Erasmus whose De Conscribendis Epistolis stated that the divisio of letters was three: deliberative, demonstrative, and judicial, to which he added a fourth category, the familiar, further subdivided into narrative, nunciatory, mandatory, lamentatory, gratulatory, jocose, conciliatory, and laudatory.[22]

The oral tradition for types of oratory is applied to written communication by Angell Day whose categories parallel Erasmus, ending with the same fourth category of the familiar and with almost identical headings.

Thus the later writers adopted the three major ancient classifications of oratory, adding new epistolary variations in response to the day. The classification for writing was never identical, yet suggested that the teachings of the medieval world was still rhetoric, but was now adapted to writing. The organization of the books also changed. Initial sections included theory; examples followed. And examples ad infinitum.[23] One could hypothesize that the world was obsessed with amplification of ideas, perhaps given some impetus by one of the most successful textbooks of the Renaissance: De copia verborum, or how to achieve variation in expression of thought.[24]

II.

Dispositio

Arguments discovered by using the methodology of inventio now had to be persuasively arranged. True, the modern reader

would see that arrangement of ideas could occur at the same time that data were accumulated. Perhaps so. But the rhetorical world discussed arrangement of ideas separately, as did dictamen, for in so doing the tidy divisions and subdivisions could be maintained, so beloved by writers of the Renaissance and earlier.

Variations of dispositio still walk through modern theories of idea organization. Surely the terminology has changed, yet the organic unity concept of Platonic philosophy finds expression in the idea that communication should possess an introduction, body, and conclusion. Remnants, these are, of an earlier time: a time when oral rhetoric laid the foundation for subsequent written theories, specifically in dictamen.

Of all the ancient concepts of rhetoric, disposition receives, with style, the most attention by subsequent writers and theorists. One could speculate that dispositio was easier to grasp than the complexities of logic with its enthymemes, its syllogisms, its topoi, and one could illustrate, vividly, the arts of a business letter better than the searching out process, or, that students could imitate--and teachers could judge-more easily specific parts of letters and orations. The innumerable sidenotes in the formulary section of the dictamen books, notably Erasmus' De Conscribendi Epistolas, suggest that it was much easier to prescribe rules of organization than consistent rules for probability logic and evidence.

But let me turn to a few ancient definitions of dispositio before discussing the conventional six parts of an oration (exordium; narratio; divisio or partitio; confirmatio;

refutatio; conclusio) and the mutations of these six in selected medieval and Renaissance dictamen writers.

Cicero has Crassus in his De Oratore say, "I learned that he (the orator) must first hit upon what to say; then manage and marshall his discoveries, not merely in orderly fashion, but with a discriminating eye for the exact weight as it were of each argument;..."[25]

Not so parallel was Aristotle: "A speech has two parts. Necessarily, you state your case, and you prove it."[26] While Aristotle's simple dichotomy is succinct, the more accepted view was that idea arrangement was more complex, lucidly stated in this analogy of Quintilian:

> Nor is it without good reason that arrangement is treated as the second of the five departments of oratory, since without it the first (inventio) is useless. For the fact that all the limbs of a statue has been cast does not make it a statue: they must be put together; and if you were to interchange some one portion of our bodies or of those of other animals with another, although the body would be in possession of all the same members as before, you would none the less have produced a monster. Again even a slight dislocation will deprive a limb of its previous use and vigour, and disorder in the ranks will impede the movement of an army.[27]

A more liberal view is espoused by the author of the Ad Herennium who suggested that the principles of rhetoric demand specific prescriptions, but in actual practice the speaker could

vary to meet the particular argument. All in all, dispositio was the logical, precise, audience adapted method of persuading receivers of a message, beginning, logically, at the beginning:

1. Exordium

No precise English word replaces the Latin exordium. Let it suffice that it means that which is spoken first, the commencement, introduction of thought which is selected to propitiate and attract the audience: oral or written. A main thrust of Cicero was that "...so in arrangement of the speech the strongest point should come first..."[28] antedating by many centuries the controversy of primacy-recency in modern communication.

Quintilian, as usual, is more clear. His lucid statement on exordium bears restatement here:

> The sole purpose of the exordium is to prepare our audience in such a way that they will be disposed to lend a ready ear to the rest of our speech. The majority of authors agree that this is best effected in three ways, by making the audience well disposed, attentive, and ready to receive instruction. I need hardly say that these aims have to be kept in mind throughout the whole speech, but they are especially necessary at the commencement, when we gain admission to the mind of the judge in order to penetrate still further.[29]

We implied earlier that some of the six dispositio canons were dropped by writers of the medieval and the Renaissance world. Not so the exordium. Vocabulary differences occur, but

beneath variant headings is still discussed the prime purpose: adapting the written material to the reader, be he of the church, business, or government.

The 11th century Italian Rationes dictandi substitutes salutatio for exordium, but the intent in a letter is the same as for an oration, "Salutio est oratio salutis affectum indicans a personarum situ non discordans."[30] A similar belief occurs in the Ars dictandi of Orleans; "Salutacio est breuis oracio que salutis affectum continet et a statu personarum non dissidet."[31] Other Italian authors and fragments of works have statements similar to the preceding, along with exemplary letters for imitation. The Candelabrum noted in Baldwin's Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic suggests that the exordium should always be in the third person, "Its order is determined by the relation of the rank or dignity of the sender to that of the recipient, though that in certain cases is waived."[32]

Little doubt exists that dictamen gained momentum in Italy, later carried over to Germany with but a pause in France. Wrote Nickisch: "Aus deren lateinisch-humanistischer Tradition ergab sich die enge Bindung an die antike Redelehre. Da man den Brief als einem Teil der Rhetorik auffasste, wurden für ihn charakteristisch rhetorische Stilmittel obligatorisch: das Dispositionsschema und der grossangelegte, vielfach untergliderte Satz."[33]

He then further illustrates two examples of an exordium, each of which illustrates adaptation of an employee (farmer) to his employer (owner), concluding with the strong statement that

"Die beiden Schreiben sind deutlich erkennbar nach dem Dispositionsschema aufgebaut. Gleich die Art des Exordiums verrät, wie die Verfasser bestrebt waren, es dem Stande und der Würde des Empfängers gemäss einzurichten. Der Grundherr muss sich mit einer recht kurzen und nich sonderlich unterwürfigen Exordialformel zufriedengeben, indes die für den Legaten oder Bischof bestimmte erheblich umfänglicher, üppiger und sehr viel devoter ausfällt."[34]

As late as the first quarter of the 17th century in Germany, Rudolph Sattler's Teutsche Rhetorick und Epistelbüchlein (Basel, 1604) and his De Epistolis germanice conscribendis, Libir III (Basel, 1618) included examples of the salutatio or exordium.

It is not our purpose to trace Erasmus' influence on the English, but he too prescribed rules and included examples of the exordium in his De Conscribendis Epistolis, and according to Stockhausens also influenced the German dictamen theory.[35] But the Englishman Day echos Erasmus when he suggests "The first place is Exordium, a beginning or induction to the matter to be written of, which is not alwayes after one sort or fashion, but in diuerse maners:..."[36] Two English works, or translations which carried the exordium theory along with examples included The Enimie of Idleness (1568) and A Panoplie of Epistles (1576).

In short, the exordium of a letter is our business letter salutation and opening paragraph today, adaptated to the reader. Most formularies for letters presumed a knowledge of rhetoric

which would have included a discussion of audience analysis, so obviously exemplified in the introduction.

2. Narratio

Secondly, the ancients suggested that a statement of the facts had now to be contiguous to the exordium. We shall omit the question of style here except to say that the plain style--to be discussed later--was preferable in expounding the facts of a case.

Quintilian felt that logical telling on the nature of the subject on which he (the listener) would have to give judgment was the statement of the facts. Latitude is allowed here. The prescriptions for narratio should be liberal because the three kinds of orations--deliberative, forensic, epideictic--had different purposes, each a different length, perhaps needing just a summary. For example, says Quintilian of the judicial: "there are two forms of statement of facts in forensic speeches, the one expounding the facts of the case itself, the other setting forth facts which have a bearing on the case."[37] Aristotle suggested that narratio is part of the forensic, alone.

Cicero suggests the narration should be stated in a plausible, lucid, and brief manner, with the Ad Herennium urging adaptation similar to that of Quintilian.

A return to the Rationes dictandi of the 11th century indicates that the traditional meaning was accepted in this early Italian work: "Narratio uero expositio est rerum gestarum uel ut potius se geri uidebuntur. Quam profecto ad cause mittentis

conmodum breuiter et aperte flectere debemus."[38] Nor in Orleans was there much variation as implied by the idea "Narracio est rerum gestarum vel prout gestarum explanacio. Prout gestarum dixi, quia in epistola licet nos quandoque mentiri."[39] Ludolf of Hildesheim is parallel: "Sequitur de narracione. Narracio est rerum gestarum uel prout gestarum posicio."[40]

In English, Angell Day apes his predecessors, unimaginatively carrying forward in circumflex style the same idea: "Then Narratio, or Propositio, each seruing to one effect, wherein is declared or proponed, in the one by plaine tearmes, in the other by inference, or comparison, the verie substance of the matter whatsoeuer to be handled."[41]

3. Divisio or partitio

For some reason this third part of disposition is consistently neglected in the medieval and Renaissance world. Succintly, the meaning of the term was a laying out, a forecast of the main points the speaker or writer was going to make. I have felt that divisio occurred, chronologically, in the wrong place, i.e., it seems logical to have the layout of direction immediately after the exordium and not placed after narratio where the arguments had been laid out. Why dictamen theorists omitted divisio, I have not been able to determine.

One instance of divisio's purpose as viewed by the ancients is sufficient.

> Partition may be defined as the enumeration in order of our own propositions, those of our adversary or both. It is held by some that this is indispensable on the ground that it makes the case clearer and the judge more attentive and more ready to be instructed, if he knows what we are speaking about and what we are going subsequently to speak about.[42]

Suffice it to conclude that writers of dictamen omit the accepted ancient concept of divisio.

4. Proof, confirmatio, peticio

The Renaissance scholar Clark clarifies an important distinction in the use of proof: "When we consider proof in rhetoric, we must be careful to remember that rhetoric does not concern itself with scientifically demonstrated truths, about which there is no debate, but with such contingent and approximate truths as lead to differences of opinion."[43]

Thus the ancients founded persuasion on probability which demanded tools in addition to reasoning: ethos or the character, intelligence, and good will of the speaker; pathos, arousing the emotions in the listener; and logos, the apparent proof in support of positions.

The logical web of evidence, argument, and order need not detain us long; such an analysis and interpretation has been grist for scholars for a long time. Only a brief review need be given.

At the core of the ancient concept of proof were arguments in support of a proposition, with evidence of two types: proofs outside the art of rhetoric (inartificial: witnesses, rumors, laws, previous courts, contracts, torture, oaths) and proofs suggested by the speaker himself (artificial: discovering arguments arising out of the speech itself, e.g., status or the analyzing of the issues implicit in any subject). For Aristotle this latter aspect of rhetoric was preeminent, moving deductively on the wheels of the enthymeme of which he says, "The enthymeme, again, is a kind of syllogism.... Consequently the person with the clearest insight into the nature of syllogisms, who knows from what premises and in what modes they may be constructed, will also be the most expert in regard to enthymemes..."[44]

Quintilian succinctly states, "Some call the enthymeme a rhetorical syllogism, while others regard it as part of the syllogism, because whereas the latter always has its premises and conclusion and effects its proof by the employment of all its parts, the enthymeme is content to let its proof be understood without explicit statement."[45]

Thus aids to proof in the ancient world were helped by understanding the syllogism and enthymeme. One also had to know apparent enthymemes, fallacies, examples, analogies, maxims, fables, all with the end of confirming the speaker's proposition.

Dictamen writers simplify the above, beginning with Alberich of Monte-Cassino who writes of peticio and omits almost all of

the ancient discussion of logic. A parallel approach is also found in the Ars dictandi of Orleans.

Peticio appears to have been adopted by the German dictamen writers as well, if one could infer from a 1538 example which exemplifies peticio, preceded by a clarifying sentence: "Ausser der Salutatio und der Conclusio besteht der Brief insgesamt aus zwei Sätzen, von denen der eine die Narratio und der andere die Petitio darstellt. Der Briefschreiber hat sich also streng an das Dispositionsschema gehalten."[46] Another German writer--German scholars were in the forefront of scholarship on the theory of dictamin--firmly suggests an Italian dependency by German writers of letters, as compared with the theoreticians we have been discussing.

> Die Theorie des Briefes zunächst schliesst sich gan an diejenige frdherer Werke an. Der Brief, der oft mit einem wohlgestalteten Leibe verglichen wird--dieser Vergleich findet sich vom Mittelalter an bis zu dem Ausgang des 17. Jahrhunderts,--wird genau in bestimmte Teile zerlegt.[47]

Day is embarrasingly simple after reviewing the preceding material, simply writing, "Then Confirmatio, wherein are amplified or suggested many reasons, for the aggrauating or proof of any matter in question."[48]

For our purposes, then, we conclude that the detailed analysis of proof as handled by the ancients is diluted in subsequent centuries. Support for ideas takes on more the hue of style, with logic subsumed more under dialectic and the study

of law. By comparison, style and its inordinate verbiage replaces, in contrast, the intricate Aristotelian discussion of logic. Reflections there are to the ancients, but done briefly and in shallow form.

5. Refutatio, confutatio

After the ancients, this fifth canon finds little exposure. If refutatio is discussed, refutation or rebuttal--its meaning--was found in no particular sequence other than a brief treatment under inventio or confirmatio. Quintilian, for example, says that refutation demands the same discipline as when determining proofs, with Cicero proposing that defense is harder than accusation. Refutation is absent in later dictamen writers.

6. Conclusio, peroration, epilog

Organic unity demands a conclusion: to orations, to epistles, to letters. Neither ancients nor subsequent writers omit its discussion.

Aristotle: The Epilogue is made up of four elements. (1) you must render the audience well-disposed to yourself, and ill-disposed to your opponent; (2) you must magnify and depreciate; (3) you must put the audience into the right state of emotion; and (4) you must refresh their memories. (Rhet., 3.19)

Ad Herennium:

> Conclusions, among the Greeks called epilogs, are tripartite, consisting of the Summing Up, Amplification, and Appeal to Pity. We can in four places use a Conclusion: in the Direct Opening, after the Statement of Facts, after the strongest argument, and in the Conclusion of the speech. (Ad. Her. 2.30.47).

De. Part. Orat:

> There are two occasions for its employment, when owing to the lapse of time or the length of your speech your distrust of the memory of your audience, and when your case will be strengthened by recapitulating and briefly setting forth the main points of your argument. (De. Part. Orat. 17.59.)

Quintilian: There are two kinds of peroration, for it may deal either with facts or with the emotional aspect of the case...the repetition and grouping of the facts serves both to refresh the memory of the judge and to place the whole of the case before his eyes, and, even although the facts may have made little impression on him in detail, their cumulative effect is considerable. (Inst., 6.1.1.)

At the heart of the conclusion stands this dictum: appeals and final statements should be brief. Aristotle's peroration in his Rhetoric is a model for emulation through the figure of an asyndeton: "I have done; you all have heard; you have the facts; give your judgment."[49]

Alberich of Monte-Cassino, called by Paetow the founder of the art of dictamen, begins our history of the conclusion in the medieval world. Substitute the term oration for letter and the dependence is complete in the following example: "Conclusio quidem est oratio qua terminatur epistola."[50] So too the wording of the Orleans' document, "Conclusio est terminalis oracio tocius epistole, per quam ostenditur quid conmodi vel inconmodi debeat sequi;"[51] with the German Ludolf agreeing in his brief statement "Conclusio est oracio summan intencionis explicans."[52]

A potpurri of other German dictamin writers either discuss or exemplify conclusio: Notariat (1538); Hugen's Rhetorica und Formulare/Teutsch (1528); Sattler's De Epistolis germanice

conscribendis (1618); and others which one may turn to in Die Stilprinzipien in den Deutschen Briefstellern des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts which concludes the whole question of dispositio with these brief words: "Ich fasse zusammen: Grundlage für alles Briefschreiben sollen die Rhetorik und das ihr zugehörige Dispositiionsschema sein."[53] Steinhausen supports the preceding generalization in his review of letter writers of the 16th and 17th century.

When the theory of dispositio reached England, the conclusio was still there, perhaps arriving there via Eramus who also had not neglected it in his De Conscribendis. Day, seemingly highly dependent on Erasmus states, "Lastlie, peroratio, in which after a briefe recapitulation of that which hath beene vrged, the occasions thereof are immediatelie concluded. These are not altogither at all times vsed, but some or the most of them as occasion serueth, either admitted or reiected."[54]

III.

Elocutio

Style-Lexis-elocutio was the third part of the ancient canons of rhetoric. Few precepts received as much emphasis in subsequent centuries. It dominated, overwhelmed, both the academic world and the world of textbook writers. Howell, in his masterful work, suggested that the pattern [style] was "openly mindful that invention, arrangement, memory, and delivery, or combinations of two or more of them, conceived in

sum as Cicero had anciently dictated, were also legitimate parts of the full rhetorical discipline.[55]

Cicero devoted most of his Orator to style, with about a third of his De Oratore to the same topic where Crassus supplies this admonition, "Now what better style of expression can there be--than that our language should be correct, lucid, ornate and suitably appropriate to the particular matter under consideration?"[56]

The Ad Herennium, Book four, Aristotle's Book three, and Quintilian's Books eight and nine emphasize style almost exclusively. Other writers, too, devoted considerable space to style, often mixing the rhetorical theories with the poetical, as for instance Longinus' On the Sublime or Dionysius of Halicarnassus' De Compositione verborum.

1. Principles of style

Underlying stylistic discussion were four virtues or purposes. Aristotle in his early work set the pattern:[57]

Clear: The proof is that language which does not convey a clear meaning fails to perform the very function of language.

Correct: Purity of language depends on correct connective words; specific words; avoidance of ambiguous language; proper gender; and agreement in grammatical number.

Appropriate: Words are like men; they must be adapted to the individual and the subject.

Ornate: Impressiveness of style involves figures of thought and language.

These four, and variations therefrom, formed the basis of stylistic virtues for centuries to come, some taught by grammarians whose territory was grammar, others by rhetoricians.

Quintilian also supports the concept of clarity as the first essential of a good style, with the Ad Herennium suggesting that clarity renders language plain and intelligible, achieved by two means, the use of current terms and of proper terms.

It is correct Latinity which keeps the language pure, and free of fault, implied the Ad Herennium. For Quintilian, correctness was a function of grammar, yet dependent on correct usage.

Embellishment or ornateness spawned a school of rhetoric one could call stylistic. The impetus was given by the ancients, but its crescendo was reached in the Renaissance. All ancient rhetoric writers discussed ornateness, suggesting artistic devices to embellish thought. Quintilian is the clearest, later to be the dominant authority in the classroom and in dictamen.

Rhetorical ornament holds attention. It supplements inventio. It must be adapted to the material to which it is applied. Having determined what one will say, suggested Quintilian, the addition of brilliance will propell the thought along. How? By using either tropes, schemes, figures of thought, or figures of language. Little agreement exists as to where one category ends and the other begins. Briefly, a trope is changing a word from its proper denotation to an unaccustomed one, for example, a metaphor. A scheme is almost any variation of a sentence or

single word; figures of thought deal with idea conception, as rhetorical question and hesitation; and figures of language deal with expression, as parallelism, antithesis, or climax. I pretend little ability to keep these categories separate; Quintilian makes the same confession.

While clarity, correctness, and appropriateness are reflected subsequent to the ancients, it is ornateness which is virtually unchanged as a rhetorical--oral--form applied by the dictamen theorists. We again start in Italy where the need for clerical and papal curia letters, legal letters, and letters between cities' business people increased along with the study of Roman law, with even suggested rhythmic cadences of phrases for important written communication. Alberich of Monte-Cassino's examples of salutations leave little doubt that the style of address is adapted to the reader, as does the rationes dictandi by Hugo of Bologna, or the piece found in Orleans called the Incipit summa dictaminis. Boncompagno's Candelabrum of the 13th century was well received in Florence and elsewhere, and, in Book two devotes considerable space to the traditional stylistic figures.

If one can accept the conclusion of Nickisch, the dictamen theoreticians in Germany by the 17th and 18th century stressed clarity as the overriding ideal, although depending heavily upon the rules of rhetoric and formulary books to illustrate the theory. Slowly, by the 14th century in Germany, "die deutsche Sprache mehr und mehr im Geschafts- und Rechtslebel des deutschen Volkes Boden gewann..."[58] I am led to believe that ornateness

dropped out of German dictamen as the language of communication changed from Latin to German. Rules there were, but an analysis of the style of 17th century German letter writers by Steinhausen concludes that writers adapted the style to the individual letter, "Im Grunde immer dieselbe, wechselt sie im einzelnen nach den Verhältnissen des Schreibers und des Emfangers."[59]

In England ornateness for writing reached its zenith. Quintilian stood supreme. Indeed, scholars laud him as the most revered of English grammar school authors, whose influence, even on Shakespeare, was acknowledged to be far beyond the classroom.[60] At Eton, around 1530, it was Erasmus' Conscribendi Epistolas that set the practice of letter writing, particularly arguments, proof of arguments, amplification and other figures. Cicero was to be emulated, copied, imitated--for stylistic purposes, with embellishments also to be learned from Erasmus' De Copia. Imitation became a pedagogical device at Eton, Ipswich, Cambridge, Bury St., Edmunds, Harrow, East Retford, and other English schools.[61]

Rather than discuss in detail the many English works devoted to ornateness and style, the following brief list exemplifies stylistic theory, practice, and often numerous formularies.

Bede, Liber de Schematibus et Tropis (701?)
John of Salisbury, Metologicon (c.1159)

Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Poetria Nova (c.1208); Summa de Coloribus Rhetoricis (13C.)

John of Garland, Poetria (13th C.); Exempla Honestae Vitae (13th C.) The Court of Sapience (1481)

John Jewell, Oratio contra Rhetoricam (1548)
Richard Sherry, A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes (1550)

William Fulwood, The Enimie of Idleness (1568)
Abraham Fleming, A Panoplie of Epistles (1576)

Henry Peacham, The Garden of Eloquence (1577)
Angel Day, The English Secretorie (1586)

John Hoskins, Directions for Speech and Style (1599)

C. S. Baldwin wrote: "Sometimes in effect essays, sometimes almost orations, they (Letters) are sometimes themes. The favorite model is Cicero; and in extreme cases the lei[illegible]e seems to consist of style. It is hardly a letter; it is an exercise."[62] The follow-up conclusion of Clark end with, "When it is understood how the Latin Epistle was taught as an exercise in the grammar schools, it is not difficult to understand how the Latin Epistles of mature scholars naturally retained traces of school training in letter writing."[63]

Most dictamin theorists followed a similar pattern. There was first a discussion of style, often complete with the rhetorical figures, and then a lengthy series of formularies, or examples, which students or writers of letters could emulate. Again, the figures noted were wholly dependent on the ancient world, now applied to letters in place of oratory.

Before leaving this section, the reader should have at least two examples of only the stylistic sidenotes accompanying a detailed letter by Day, along with words of the divisio.

AN EPISTLE MONITORIE TO A FATHER, TOUCHING THE LEWD AND ILL DEMEANOUR OF HIS SONNE.

Exordium
--Allegoria

Narratio
--Anithesis
--Erotema
--Aporia
--Prolepsis
--Orismus
--Parimia
--Metonomia
--Sentenia
--Allgogria
--Metonomia
--Antithesis

Peroration

A CONSOLATORIE EPISTLE OF THE THIRD SORT, WHEREIN A GENTLE-WOMAN IS COMFOTED OF THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND SLAINE IN THE WARRES

Exordium
--Metaphora

Narratio
--Paramologia
--Allegoria
--Synonymia
--Auxesis
--Syndeton
--Etiologia
--?lus 29 other figures

Peroration

In sum, Day applied the principle of ornateness to letter writing. But his contribution was adapting his letters to his English readers, to contemporary needs. Not he, nor many of the other theorists, could let go of the ancient concept of ornateness.

2. Levels of style

There existed a triad of rhetorical styles in ancient writing: the grand, middle, and the plain, originally used to classify the various types of oratory, later applied to literature, prose, poetry, and letter writing.

The grand style was used to move an audience to action, the orator making use of elevated diction, figures, and amplification:

> A discourse will be composed in the Grand Style if to each idea are applied the most ornate words that can be found for it, whether literal or figurative; if impressive thoughts are chosen, such as are used in Amplification and Appeal to Pity; and if we employ figures of thought and figures of diction which have grandeur.[64]

Furthermore, the grand style touched the feelings of an audience, this idea and the preeminence of the grand style above the others was strongly supported by Cicero and Quintilian.[65]

At the other pole was the mean, the low, or the plain style. D'Alton's description is apt:

> The language employed by the oratory of the Plain Style was akin to the speech of everyday life, and the power of close reasoning demanded from him was emphasized when such a style was brought into relation with his function of instructing the judge on the facts of his case, and the setting forth of his proofs. The more complete was the formulation of the Plain style, the more was the contrast heightened between it and the Grand stle.[66]

In the middle, but not always clearly, stood the intermediate, theoretically borrowing from the categories at the ends of the stylistic continuum. Lumped in this category were these orators who Cicero demeaningly described as using "neither the intellectual appeal of the latter class (plain) nor the fiery force of the former (grand); akin to both, excelling in neither, sharing in both, or, to tell the truth, sharing in neither..."[67] Others were not so derogatory, particularly the Ad Herennium or Quintilian.

The tripartite stylistic precepts were carried along through the medieval dictamen writers. The Candelbarum (c. 1213) suggests that humilis, mediocris, and sublimis is applicable to

letter writing, along with the admonition to avoid aridness, looseness, and inflation of the idea. That the three styles were discussed in other Italian works I have been unable to determine primarily because dictamen was slowly replaced with ars notaria i.e., the art of writing public and legal documents, a forerunner of a notary.

Nevertheless, the three patterns of style appeared for the first time in Germany in 1580 in a work by Abraham Sawr entitled Penvs Notariorvm (1580). One chapter discussed differences under the chapter rubric of "Von zierlicher Red der Rhetoric," with a distinct ancient ring in the categorization:

> Dagegen: "Der mittel Styl wirt geübt durch minder treffenliche Wort vnd Zierd--dann nämlich, wenn weniger gewichtige Dinge im Brief oder in einer Rede zu behandeln sind. Während also der schwere Stil sich dadurch auszeichnen soll, dass er den Inhalt so eindrucks-und kunstvoll wie möglich darbietet, und während das gleiche im mittleren Stil um einen Grad reduziert geschehen soll, möge man sich im dritte(n) Styl, der nider vnd demütiger Form ist, nach dem Vorbild der schlichttreuherzigen Umgangssprache richten."[68]

He follows his definition with examples, suggesting that even in tone and expression the lower style, for example, should approach the ancient ideal of good oratory.

Sattler's Thesavrus Notariorum (1618) gives examples of stylistic limits--die obere und untere Grenze--applicable to certain letters, which is the dominant inference Nickisch draws for the first half of the seventeenth century, "Welche Stilart angemessen ist, bestimmt der gesellschartliche Rang der Briefpartner."[69] By deduction, we conclude that German dictamen

theoreticians, at least by the second quarter of the 17th century, were turning from the ancient Ciceronian examples to French letters, as illustrations to be imitated.

The English acted predictably: their neo-classical interest took them back to the ancients, even infusing a concept of the three styles in the form of address to noble persons. Chaucer is no exception:

> Your termes, your colours, and your figures, Kepe hem in stoor til so be ye endyte Heigh style, as whan that men to kinges write.[70]

English dictamen theorists were no less enthusiastic, giving a rhetorical nod to their ancient predecessors. Day, for once, is succinct, and can serve as an adequate summary:

> "Now is as much as Eloquution is annexed vnto the stile, which euermore is also tied to the argument and substance of euerie Epistle: it is to be regarded what stile maie generallie bee deemed meetest for the common habit, wherein each of them maie ordinarilie be published. In the recording whereof, we do find three sorts, especiallie in all kinds of writing and speaking, to haue bene generallie commended."[71]

Sherry's trilogy is the "greate, the small, the meane." Fleming in his Panoplie hints at an awareness of classical division when he discusses adapting to readers, as does Blount in his Academie of Eloquence, further suggesting that the term "fashion" replace style. One could presume that by 1654, and earlier, the vestiges of the ancients began to fade, writers reacting to their immediate period; some individual and creative thinking began to replace the prescriptions followed for many years.

* * * * *

Thus the Greek, Roman, and humanistic oral tradition significantly influenced the theory of letter writing in its formative years. As the ancients had exercises for oral composition, so too there were subsequent literary exercises for letter writing, compiled in medieval and Renaissance formula books along with prescriptions as to form and substance. These prescriptions were grounded on oral rhetoric.

During the medieval period rhetoric found its home in the church which demanded clarity and simplicity. In turn rhetoric was thus shorn of several precepts: delivery and memory dropped out; logic and dialectic were captured by law. Result? Rhetoric had primarily style remaining, with portions of inventio and dispositio. It was these latter canons which dictamen appropriated to itself, the seminal momentum beginning in Italy, then to France, Germany, and England.

The theoretical manuals were similar to organization: theory preceded practice; explanations preceded examples, with the result that for years identical examples and definitions marched through the texts, until the realities of the world replaced mere copying or imitation of Cicero. Letters of state--Chancery letters--; statesmen-scholar letters; legal letters; and merchants-prince letters thus have some dependence on the oral world.

Guided by the precepts of the past, we should recognize that written communication has an ancient heritage; that it held a significant position in one of the original seven liberal arts of mankind.

Notes

1. Louis J. Paetow, "The Arts Course at Medieval Universities With Special Reference to Grammar and Rhetoric," in: University Studies of the University of Illinois, Vol. 3, No. 7 (January, 1910), pp. 67-91.

2. Aristotle, Rhetoric, trans. Lane Cooper (New York, 1932) 1.2. A fuller discussion of the philosophy behind Aristotle's definition is in Cope: "That which gives its peculiar and distinctive character to his [Aristotle] treatment of Rhetoric is, as he himself tells us, that he has established its connextion with Dialectics, the popular branch of Logic, of which it is a 'branch' or 'offshoot' or 'counterpart' or 'copy,' which enables him to give a systematic and scientific exposition of it as a special kind of reasoning and mode of proof...." E. M. Cope, An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric (London, 1867), reprinted by William C. Brown, n.d., p. 6.

3. Cicero, De Oratore, trans. E. W. Sutton (Cambridge, Mass., 1948) I.viii.30.

4. Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, trans. H. E. Butler (Cambridge, Mass., 1943) II.xiv.5.

5. Specifically, the art of letter writing. Variously titled dictamen, dictamen prosarum, or ars dictaminis. I shall use the term dictamen.

6. See the socratic dialogues Gorgias and Phaedrus wherein is cogently argued the main objections to rhetoric. Plato, Gorgias, Phaedrus in: The Dialogues of Plato, trans. Benjamin Jowell, ed. William C. Green (New York, 1927).

7. Charles Sears Baldwin, Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (1928), reprinted by Peter Smith (1959) pp. 151-52.

8. Paetow, p. 67.

9. See Quintilian, Books, 3,4,5,6; Cicero, De Inventione, trans. H. M. Hubbel (Cambridge, Mass., 1949); Cicero De Oratore, 2.27.116.ff; Rhetorica ad Herennium, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, Mass., 1945) 1.-3.8.15; Aristotle, Rhetoric, Books 1. and 2.

10. Erasmus, Opera Omnia, "De Ratione Conscribendi Epistolas" Vol. I, (1703), pp. 345-484.

11. Thomas Blount, The Academie of Eloquence (London, 1654), p. 141. Hoyt Hudson was the first to suggest that this work was a pirated copy of John Hoskins' Directions for Speech and Style (London, 1599). See John Hoskins, Directions for Speech and Style, Ed. Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton, 1935), p. xxxi.

12. Angell Day, The English Secretary (1599), reprinted by Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints (1967), p. 9.

13. Ad Herennium, 3.2.2.

14. Quintilian, 3.8.1.

15. Ad Herennium, 1.14.24. A fulsome discussion of all three kinds of oratory, and the controversies of the classification are discussed in Quintilian 3.4.12-16.

16. Quintilian, 3.9.1.

17. Ad Herennium, 3.7.10.

18. Quintilian, 3.4.12.

19. Cicero, De Partitione Oratoria, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), 3.10.

20. Alberich von Monte Cassino, Rationes dictandi in: Ludwig Rockinger, Briefsteller und formelbücher (Munich, 1863), reprinted by Burt Franklin (New York, 1961), pp. 22-26.

21. Reinhard M. G. Nickisch, Die Stilprinzipien in den Deutschen Briefstellern des 17. und 18, Jahrunderts in: Palaestra Band 254 (Göttingen, 1969), p. 17.

22. Erasmus, Conscribendi, p. 380.

23. An interesting hypothesis by Haskins is that many of the student letters in the Medieval period were constructed in accordance with prescribed schemes: "for the ordinary man the writing of a letter meant, not the composition of an original epistle of his own, but the laborious copying of a letter of some one else, altered where necessary to suit the new conditions.... When real letters were used the names were often omitted or altered beyond recognition." See C. H. Haskins, "Life of Medieval Students as Illustrated by Their Letters," American Historical Review, Vol. 3 (October 1897-July 1898) p. 205.

24. See Erasmus, De duplici copia verborum ac rerum, trans. Donald B. King, H. David Rix, (Milwaukee, 1963).

25. Cicero, De Oratore, 1.31.142.

26. Aristotle, 3.13.

27. Quintilian, 7.Pr.2.

28. Cicero, De Oratore, 2.77.314. See also Cicero, Orator, 15,50: "And when he has gained attention by introduction, he will establish his own case, refute and parry the opponent's argument, choosing the strongest points for the opening and closing, and inserting the weaker points in between."

29. Quintilian, 4.1.5.

30. Rockinger, p. 10.

31. Ibid., p. 103.

32. Baldwin, MRP, p. 220.

33. Nickisch, p. 204.

34. Ibid., p. 23.

35. Johann Stockhausens, Grundsatze Briefe (Trattnern, 1766), p. 12.

36. Day, p. 11.

37. Quintilian, 4.2.11.

38. Rocklinger, p. 19.

39. Ibid., p. 109.

40. Ibid., p. 368.

41. Day, p. 11.

42. Quintilian, 4.5.1.

43. Donald Lemen Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education, (Morningside Heights, 1957), p. 117.

44. Aristotle, 1.1.

45. Quintilian, 5.14.24.

46. Nickisch, p. 35.

47. Georg Steinhausen, Geschichte des Deutschen Briefes (1889), reprinted by Weidmann (1968), Vol. 1, p. 103. See the excellent summary of Haskins of German Dictamen Research: Palacky, Ueber Formelbücher, zunächst in Bezug auf böhmische Geschichte, in: Abhandlungen der königlichen bohmischen Gesellschaft der Wissenchaften (1842, 1847), fifth series, II. 219-368, V. 1-216; Wattenbach, Ueber Briefsteller des Mittelalters, Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschicht-squellen, XIV. 29-94 (and separately as Iter Austriacum); Rockinger, Ueber Formelbücher vom dreizehnten bis zum sechszehnten Jahrhundert

als rechtgeschichtliche Quellen (Munich, 1855); Ibid, Ueber Briefsteller und Formelbücher in Deutschland während des Mittelalters (Munich, 1861); Ibid, Ueber die ars dictandi und die summae dictaminis in: Italien, Sitzungsberichte of the Munich Academy, 1861, I. 98 ff.; Ibid, Briefsteller und Formelbücher des eilften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, in: Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen und deutschen Geschichte, IX; Valois, De Arte Scibendi Epistolas apud Gallicos Medii Aevi Scriptores Rhetoresve (Paris thesis, 1880); Gabrielli, L'Epistole di Cola di Rienzo e l'Epistole grafia medievale, in: Archivio della Societa Romana di Storia Patria (1888), XI. 379-479; Gaudenzi, Sulla Chronologia delle Opere dei Dettatori Bolognesi, in: Bullettino dell, Instituto Storico Italiano, XIV. 85-174; Langlois, Formulaires de Lettres du XII e, du XIII e, et du XIV e siecle, in: the Notices et Extraits des MSS., XXXIV. and XXXV., 1890-1896 (five monographs on various medieval formularies; the author is also to publish a comprehensive study of the artes dictaminis composed in France and England in the Middle Ages). Several treatises and formularies have been edited, especially in Germany. There is a bibliograph in Oesterley, Wegweiser durch die Literatur der Urkundensammlungen, I. 7-18 ("bibliographie incomplete et confuse mais qui n'en rend pas moins des services"--Giry); see also the appendix to Rockinger, Ueber Formelbücher. An excellent brief survey of the subject is given by Bresslau, Handbuch der Urkundenlehre, I. 624-645. Haskins, p. 204, n. 2.

48. Day, p. 11.

49. Aristotle, 3.19.

50. Rocklinger, p. 21.

51. Ibid., p. 109.

52. Ibid., p. 368.

53. Nickisch, p. 22. Perhaps the best analysis of dispositio in Italian works is found in Bresslau's analysis of documentary writing. He notes that church and legal letters had these divisions: Salutatio, Prologus oder Exordium, Narratio und Conclusio; or Salutatio, Captatio benevolentiae, Narratio, Petitio und Conclusio. See Harry Bresslau, Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien (Berlin, 1915), reprinted by Walter De Gruyter (Berlin, 1968), Vol. II, pp. 248ff.

54. Day, p. 11.

55. Wilbur Samuel Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700 (Princeton, 1956), p. 116. See also the classic statement on style and prose in the ancient world, Eduard Norden, Die Antike Kunstprosa Vom VI Jahrhundert V. Chr. Bis in die Zeit der Renaissance (1898), reprinted by B. G. Teubner (1974), Vols. I and II.

56. Cicero, De Oratore, 3.10.37.

57. See Aristotle, 3. ff. One of the better discussions of Aristotle's concept of style is found in the following survey work: George Kennedy, The Art of Persuasion in Greece (Princeton, 1963), pp. 103ff.

58. Johannes Müller, Quellenschriften und Geschichte des deutsch-sprachlichen Unterrichtes bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts (Gotha, 1882) in: Nickisch, p. 19.

59. Steinhausen, Vol. 1, p. 50.

60. T. W. Baldwin, William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke (Urbana, 1944), Vol. II, pp. 197ff.

61. Donald Lemen Clark, John Milton at St. Paul's School, (New York, 1948), p. 186.

62. Charles Sears Baldwin, Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice (New York, 1939), p. 41, in: Clark, John Milton, p. 186.

63. Clark, John Milton, p. 186.

64. Ad Herennium, 4.8.11.

65. Cf. Cicero, De Oratore 1.60; Orator 97; Quintilian, 11.1.85.

66. J. F. D'Alton, Roman Literary Theory and Criticism (New York, 1931) reprinted by Russell and Russell (New York, 1962), p. 70.

67. Cicero, Orator, 5.21.

68. Nickisch, p. 33.

69. Ibid., p. 72.

70. Charles Sears Baldwin, Medieval, p. 292.

71. Day, p. 10.